

## Healing Functional Scoliosis with LSD and Cannabis

anonymous

My spine is in the process of straightening after 26 years of gradual curving. I've grown two inches in the last year - I was 5'4. Now I'm 5'6". My eyesight is improving dramatically - I can read text from further away than I have since childhood, and am beginning to see the world in 3D once again

I was given a diagnosis of functional scoliosis at the age of 17. However, I had begun to experience the symptoms - vicious throbbing migraine headaches with severe sensitivity to light and sound and a gradual degradation of vision in my right eye and of mobility in my right hand - as early as age five.

The migraines were devastating. They were catalyzed and intensified by sensory input. The pain was concentrated on the right side of the head, specifically the right eye, eyebrow, and temple. Once the pain started, the only way to gain any relief was to go to sleep.

My eyesight in the right eye begins declining around age seven - about the same time as the migraines are intensifying. Year after year eye doctor visits reveal a further one-point decline in the acuity of my right eye. In less than three years I go from perfect 20:20 vision to needing glasses to see more than a few feet in front of my face.

The disorientation of suffering mind-altering severe pain several times a week while in school results in my spending a year of school in a supply closet. I develop serious social anxiety and begin to establish obsessive compulsive thought patterns in an attempt to find control in an uncontrollable situation. (If I put the pencils away just so, I won't get a headache tomorrow.)

By age 12, the migraines are so bad that my family doctor decides I must have brain cancer. I remember sitting in the sterile beige office of a downtown high-rise, having my head measured by a sterile beige doctor. "Your head is abnormally large. We need to do an MRI."

My parents decide against putting me through the MRI machine, for which I am most grateful. I obviously didn't have brain cancer, but after that I get to have multiple brain cancer related anxiety attacks a year.

By the time I reach college, another type of chronic pain begins to manifest - shooting sciatica-like pain originating in my left hip and extending all the way down to my foot. Again, the only sure solution to this pain is sleep.

A visit to the family doctor yields a diagnosis of functional scoliosis, and no particular recommendation for what to do about it. He does suggest that I take as many as five over-the-counter ibuprofen every time I start to feel a migraine come on. This is effective in stopping the

pain, and so for the next eight years I take between five and 25 ibuprofen a week. I'm still apologizing to my liver to this day.

At the age of 20, I'm given a prescription for Relpax, a migraine medication that functions similarly to ergotamine. In sharp contrast to the other prescription medicines in my life, which are rapidly deteriorating my physical and mental health, Relpax is a miracle. I take a single pill at the beginning of a migraine, experience a pleasurable tingling in my lymph nodes (a sensation I will experience again four years later while coming up on LSD for the first time), and fall into a deep dreamless sleep. After taking just twelve of these pills over a period of month, the migraines stop and don't return until I begin the process of healing my spine years later.

Although the migraines are gone, I still experience constant back and hip pain, which often wake me up from sleep or prevent me from sleeping. I remain mostly sedentary (other than walking several miles a week) for the next six years.

At age 21, I am diagnosed with major depressive disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, and avoidant personality disorder. At age 24, I am diagnosed with obsessive-compulsive disorder. Prescriptions for Xanax and SSRI antidepressants leave me with a benzodiazepene dependency, severe obsessive compulsive tics and anxiety (whenever there isn't a certain amount of Xanax in my system), and the firm belief that I am severely, permanently mentally ill.

This self-perception begins to shift when I discovered LSD while living overseas at the age of 23.

My first LSD experience shows me a strong, capable side to myself that I have not experienced before. I know within an hour of taking my first dose that I need to find a reliable source, and that I need space to work with it alone.

Through a series of mind-bendingly bizarre misadventures, I acquire a small stash of paper LSD and my own room in an apartment on the edge of one of the most dangerous neighborhoods in the country. During my three-month stay there I have four LSD experiences – each time, I take 100 mics, followed by another 100 mics several hours later. Each time, I feel the knots of anxiety embedded in my brain loosen and release, and wake up the morning after in a world that contains exponentially greater hope, freedom, and joy than it had the day before.

The OCD symptoms I have been developing (obsessive-compulsive laundry-doing, repetitive door-checking, etc.) decrease steadily during this three-month period. At present (age 28) I no longer experience obsessive-compulsive thought patterns, and am not significantly impaired by anxiety or depression.

At age 24, after my four initial solitary LSD sessions, I'm still taking tons of ibuprofen, am still dependent on Xanax, and am completely detached from my body and the messages it is sending me. This all changes when, at the age of 25, I start practicing yoga - my first foray into physical exercise since my early twenties. I take to it immediately and start practicing for several hours a day, four to five times a week.

Just after my 26th birthday I begin to experience a dull, heavy ache in my right shoulder, often accompanied by the return of the migraine headaches, which I have not experienced since my experience with Relpax at age 20.

I go to a chiropractor in Chicago. He takes x-rays of my cervical spine and tells me that many of the vertebrae are significantly dislocated. "You have a lot of work to do," he says. He begins to teach me how my everyday ways of sitting, standing, and walking are not stable or sustainable, but I struggle to put his suggestions into practice in my life.

A few months later, I move to California. The shoulder pain and headaches become daily experiences, and I begin working with a talented chiropractor neurologist. She does gentle adjustments with an Activator Adjustment Instrument, applies electrical stimulation to key points on my shoulder, cervical spine, and lumbar spine, and encourages me to balance the hemispheres of my brain by stimulating the left side of my body and pursuing creative activities (which I do by learning to read Braille with my left hand and taking up music again).

She also gives me several sessions of balloon sinuplasty - inflating tiny balloons into my sinuses. During one such session, during which she successfully inflates the balloon into all six of my sinuses, I feel tiny little bones inside of my head shift, pop, and adjust.

I receive a recommendation for a medical cannabis card at this time, and begin using cannabis regularly for the first time in my life. As I am experiencing significant pain every day, I am consuming edibles in fairly high quantities on a regular basis - 40-80 mg THC 4-6 times a week. The cannabis medicine significantly reduces pain and inflammation and allows me to feel emotionally stable, peaceful, and content, even when my body hurts.

After four months of treatment, the chiropractor tells me I can start coming in every six weeks for maintenance, as I am in good shape. The treatments have reduced the daily pain somewhat, but it is still ever-present. I feel a little different, but not much.

I have to give up my daily yoga practice, as I find that many of the positions trigger shoulder pain and headache. I spend several months doing very little physical exercise other than walking (five to six miles a week).

One month after concluding my weekly chiropractic appointments (just after my 27th birthday), I take 100 mics of LSD with a friend. We are lying down in bed during the come-up. When I move to get up, my lumbar spine cracks - loud as a gunshot. My friend is startled. My body feels wonderful, and I feel as if I am seeing a little straighter than before.

During the experience that follows, I feel more grounded and stable in my body than I can remember. We go for a long walk to a park at the top of a hill. I dance for the first time in a long time and experience unparalleled freedom. And in the morning my body doesn't hurt.

I take LSD again in August (at the approximately the same dose), and experience something similar - a massive "thunk" from my lumbar spine, surprised friends, and a significant visual adjustment. I went into this trip with some muscle tension and neck pain, so although I feel great

after the adjustment, I begin to experience a severe migraine around hour five - radiating out from the mass of tension at the back of my neck that has been building for decades. I spend several hours doing yogic breathing exercises, at the end of which I throw up and fall into a deep sleep. All pain is gone when I wake up.

In March of the next year, I microdose with LSD (10 mics). I stretch out in my chair, and experience a third loud lumbar adjustment. An hour later, running to catch a bus, I realize I am moving faster than I ever have on these legs. Surprised at my speed of movement, I almost fall over my own feet.

In the coming months, it feels as if every bone in my body adjusts at least once. The daily pain begins to decrease until I am only experiencing mild pain a few times a week, and debilitating pain once every few months (usually due to physical overexertion and sensory overstimulation). My experiences with LSD during this allow me to feel the straightness of my body, my physical potential when aligned. These experiences act as a "blueprint," informing my constant attention to and adjustment of my posture. I also experience significantly improved visual acuity during these psychedelic experiences.

A physical exam in May of this year (2013) had me at 5'6" - two inches taller than I was when I moved to California. My eyesight without glasses is significantly improved. I can feel my right eye getting stronger, and am beginning to see in 3D further and further away.

Now, at age 28, physical pain and discomfort is fairly mild and infrequent. There are still ups and downs as my muscles and bones become accustomed to standing, sitting, breathing, and sleeping in new positions. My muscles ache regularly, but it's a healthy ache. Too much stimulation or exertion can still trigger migraines, but I am learning how to hold my body to prevent them and reduce their intensity.

I believe that the primary medicines responsible for my healing have been cannabis and LSD. Cannabis allows my muscles and mind to rest when the challenges of my constantly evolving structure become too intense. LSD catalyzed the first major shifts in my spinal structure and gave me the experience of a straight spine, providing me with hope, encouragement, and wisdom that strongly impacts my mental experience of my body in everyday life.

Chronic pain no longer significantly inhibits my life. For the first time as an adult, I am in a strong, flexible, capable body, and I am enjoying it tremendously. I am able to ride a bike for several miles a day (impossible for more than a few minutes a year ago). I hike, dance, and practice yoga. I recently took up Aikido, and spent several hours at a rock climbing gym last week which, to my great joy, was exhilarating and did not overstrain my body.

There are still days when I stay home despite a desire to go out because my body is too tired and achey to keep going. Now, however, I see a future with less pain than my past. I trust that my spine will grow healthier with age, rather than twisting more deeply. I'm beginning a new life, and am impossibly grateful.

Pain is inevitable, yet it is the basis for healing. Suffering is samsaric, yet it is the basis for enlightenment. Through this experience, I have gained incredible body awareness and a deep gratitude for my physical form, which I once resented. I dedicate my experience to the benefit of others who are experiencing chronic pain due to misalignments of the body.

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